

Courte Oreilles Lakes Association (COLA) letter sent to thirty-three (33) property owner on Lac Courte Oreilles whose property abut the public access reserve strip in Northwood Beach.

Courte Oreilles Lakes Association
Kris Sivertson, COLA Board President
PO Box 702
Hayward, WI 54834

December 15, 2015

Dear

There has been a lot of conversation and activity surrounding the Public Access Reserve Strip issue here on LCO. COLA understands that at least a few homeowners affected are questioning COLA's written suggestions submitted on October 26 to the Bass Lake Township Board. COLA discussed this at our last Board monthly meeting and we decided to first contact those directly affected by the issue—you and the 32 other property owners along the Reserve Strip—to explain why COLA submitted the suggestions it did. We will also inform the COLA membership as a whole of this issue and COLA's actions. There is a way COLA may be able to help you in the near future regarding this situation. Please read the rest of this letter and then contact me with any of your questions or concerns. I look forward to hearing from you.

* The suggestions COLA submitted to Bass Lake Township are attached for your reference.

One complaint you may have is that you don't feel COLA is supporting you as a homeowner. It may help to know that COLA is legally defined and incorporated as a lake association and not a homeowners association. COLA's sole mission is to improve and protect the lake and its water quality as a way to ensure use and enjoyment of LCO by homeowners on the lake and the public. COLA's goal in submitting the suggestions it did is with that foremost in mind and to also help ensure your continued *access* to the lake in light of the Public Access Reserve Strip issue.

Reasons for submitting written suggestions to Bass Lake Township

It's important to emphasize why COLA submitted the suggestions it did to the Bass Lake Township.

. Contrast the suggestions COLA submitted with another possible scenario, one in which the Town of Bass Lake could respond with the requirement that all private structures currently on public land be removed completely and immediately, to include stairways, docks, and boat lifts that encroach on the public land strip. Again, as a lake association, COLA is advocating for your continued access to, and enjoyment of the lake.

. COLA followed-up on and supported the suggestions that were brought up and discussed at the Town Board meeting on September 14th because this approach may be fairest to the homeowner. At the

meeting it was requested that all responses to this Reserve Strip issue be submitted in writing by November 9th. Three homeowners also submitted these same suggestions in writing to Bass Lake Township. These suggestions are a way to support a process that supports you.

. By submitting formal suggestions as requested by the Township, COLA is an early supporter of the motion to take a step-by-step approach over time. In doing so, COLA is trying to ensure that your access to the lake in the form of stairways, docks, and lifts will not be adversely affected by measures taken to address this Reserve Strip issue. In other words, as a lake association, COLA is doing what it can to ensure your existing and ongoing access to, and enjoyment of LCO, now and in the years to come.

Other ways COLA can help you

. **Installations** - Given that COLA's number-one goal is improving and protecting water quality, a proven way to do that is through shoreland "buffers" on both residential and public lands surrounding LCO. Buffers work because they prevent run-off into the lake of substances that negatively impact the lake, including phosphorus and sediment.

. **Shoreland Buffer Grant** - You may have seen on the COLA website, in the *Short Ears, Long Tails* email newsletter, and in *The Loon Call* that last April, 2015, that COLA received a grant to install shoreland buffers on 25 properties on LCO. COLA can work with the Bass Lake Township through this grant to restore the area 35 feet landward (up) from the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) of the Public Reserve Strip. In addition to being a proven way to improve and protect water quality, shoreland buffers also visually improve shoreland areas and help to stabilize the shoreland through plantings and related activities.

. **19 Available** - COLA installed buffers on two properties during the summer 2015, and four more properties are slated for summer 2016, so there are 19 more buffer installations available through this grant.

. **Public Land Eligible** – Since the grant that COLA received is limited to working 35' landward from the OHWM, private property associated with the reserve strip would likely not be eligible, but the public land would be. COLA has presented this opportunity to Justin Hall, Town Board Chairman, and he likes the idea of COLA's help with shoreland buffers on sections of the reserve strip that need it. COLA is working with the Bass Lake Township to partner on shoreland restoration activities.

. **Homeowner Benefits** - If COLA works with the Township to restore sections of this public land, you as a homeowner benefit as well. The shoreland in front of your property is made more stable through natural plantings that also enhance the visual effect. All of this contributes to your enjoyment of the lake and the value of your property.

. **Part of Removal Process** - Installing a shoreland buffer can be helpful after you remove even a small structure from the public land in front of your property. The bare ground left behind can be a source of run-off into the lake, not to mention that it would be unsightly. Installing a buffer fixes all of that.

Please contact me for more information about how this grant can be applied to the public land in front of your property. The goal of installing these buffers around the lake is to improve water quality by reducing run-off into the lake from any shoreland properties, including the Public Access Reserve Strip.

All of this is a good start. Thank you for reading this letter. And, again, please contact me with any questions, concerns, or additional suggestions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Attachment: COLA Suggestions to Bass Lake Township regarding Public Access Reserve Strip Ordinances

Regards,

//Original Signed//

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